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General Assembly

Twenty-fourth special session

Official Records

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Geneva

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Proposals for further initiatives for social development

(a) Review and appraisal of progress since the World Summit for Social Development

(b) Proposals for further initiatives for the full implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Serene Highness Crown Prince Albert, Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco.

Crown Prince Albert (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): I am particularly pleased, Mr. President, at seeing you preside over the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, and I congratulate you. Speaking both as the head of the delegation of Monaco and as a Vice-President of the Assembly, I wish to say that you can count on my unreserved support.

The work of this world conference is particularly important, as it is taking place at a time of exceptionally speedy and profound change in the world. Despite the many positive qualities of globalization, which is the essence of that change, today its disadvantages are becoming obvious to the eyes of attentive observers. It would therefore be inappropriate to continue to sing the praises of globalization without some reservation, especially after the serious disappointments that have piled up since the Copenhagen Summit. Similarly, I also think that we should not condemn it out-of-hand and blame it for every evil.

A challenge to the established order, which may sometimes be painful, is to be expected when scientific and technological progress brings about sudden and profound changes in human societies. We are now living through just such a revolution, which is having disruptive effects in countries in transition and developing countries, as well as developed ones. It therefore behoves us to get a better grasp of these changes in order to try to remedy their most harmful effects on human beings and on their legitimate aspirations to take advantage of the social and economic benefits those changes bring.

There is no doubt that the progress that has been made in communications and in the exchange of information initially benefited economic liberalization, which lends itself more readily to adaptation than does political power, whose influence requires time and room to take hold. The wisdom of our countries is beginning to awaken. After a useful period of reflection, political leaders in many of our countries, in conjunction with the dynamic forces of civil society and of the working world, are devoting themselves to taking control of the most nefarious effects of this

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technological revolution at both the national and international levels.

The market economy is also experiencing its natural limits. It no longer appears to respond exclusively to the satisfaction of basic individual and collective long-term needs. Its ambition is now short-term and is out of sync with the slow pace of change in human societies. As Max Weber pointed out, in order for capitalism to be established enduringly, a process of maturation and adaptation to social values is required. In reality, a liberalized economy can find no lasting justification unless its benefits extend to entire populations, as well as to the people of both the North and the South. Social development is therefore more allied with liberalism than it is in implacable opposition to it.

It is this philosophy, and its own deep sense of social responsibility, that inspire the actions of the Government of the Principality of Monaco. On the enlightened initiative of my father, the Sovereign Prince, the Government of Monaco takes its decisions with a long-term view. It invests in the education of its young people and in adult education in order to ensure that the working population can adapt to new technologies and ways of working. The public authorities pay particular attention to people seeking work, and offers them free opportunities to improve their knowledge, especially in the areas of foreign languages and computer science.

Since 1995, a system has been in place to facilitate the professional reintegration of persons experiencing difficulties. If necessary, those persons can be assisted by a tutor. The salaries of these surplus staff are now guaranteed by the State.

The Government of Monaco has made significant social and economic provisions for persons experiencing great difficulty, handicapped people, elderly persons and children with acute life problems. These include not only providing grants, but also moral support such as that offered by the organization called "Jeunes J'écoute" and, to a certain extent, by the Princess Stephanie Youth Centre.

With the assistance of home-care workers, a home service was established in 1998 for elderly and handicapped persons.

All the people of Monaco can avail themselves of family and housing assistance services, even though the priority beneficiaries of those services are the most disadvantaged.

The social services of the local government, which is very close to the population, and those of charity groups have the regular support and encouragement of the State and are useful additions to this mechanism.

The approach of the authorities of Monaco to social development is characterized by a large degree of volunteerism.

Moreover, Monaco's social policy is coordinated by a public system whose resources represent almost 10 per cent of the State's operating budget and 5.25 per cent of its annual budget.

The national report produced for this special session sets out in detail the ways in which this commitment is carried out and outlines Monaco's efforts at the international level. Those efforts are carried out in accordance with our country's capabilities and take various forms. The Government of the Principality makes annual voluntary contributions to various United Nations programmes such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme. It also very regularly makes its contribution to the United Nations Children's Fund and to the United Nations funds set up for handicapped persons. In 1999, it also contributed to the fund established for the International Year of Older Persons and the one set up to facilitate the preparations for this special session.

Furthermore, the authorities of Monaco have recently decided to make a substantial contribution to the World Health Organization programme to oversee the battle against emerging, re-emerging and communicable diseases, as well as to the Alliance of Cities Against Poverty.

The Principality of Monaco is a very active partner in the International Organization of la Francophonie, whose concerns about cultural identity and social development it shares, particularly now, during these times of globalization. Monaco makes its voluntary contribution to cooperation among countries that have French as a common language. The declaration adopted by that organization reflects our will to globalize solidarity, and it will certainly be a

valuable source of inspiration as we implement the Copenhagen Programme of Action.

Several non-governmental organizations established in the Principality of Monaco undertake many missions to implement social development work in developing countries. The Monaco authorities will ensure that significant support is provided to them.

The Red Cross of Monaco, of which I am President, having taken over from my mother, Princess Grace, gives a large part of its resources, which often come from gifts and legacies, to countries affected by war, famine or other natural disasters.

The World Association of Friends of Children (AMADE), which is presided over by my sister, Her Royal Highness the Princess of Hanover, is very active, and has representation in some 20 countries. In addition to its determination to protect young children, in keeping with a resolution adopted in 1993 at the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and its efforts to mobilize the young people of Monaco to help young people who are less fortunate, AMADE is developing many social programmes in the countries of the South, including building school complexes, training centres and houses for children, as well as setting up integrated rural development projects.

The "schools of the four winds", which have been set up for street children, and the international "Tears without Eyes" programme to fight nutritional blindness, which is being undertaken with the cooperation of UNICEF, can also be credited to that Association.

The Monaco Aid and Presence Association, supported by the State, contributes to relief for civilian victims of armed conflict, thanks to a very effective volunteer medical team. It also undertakes activities for long-term social development, such as setting up orphanages and institutions for handicapped children in India and Sri Lanka. It has also established dispensaries in India and the Niger to provide health services and health care to people in need. In 1997, the organization began a family housing initiative in Brazil and set up a primary school — the Prince Rainier III School — in Madagascar for 1,700 children.

Finally, thanks to Mission Childhood, social development activities are being carried out in sensitive regions, often with the cooperation of United Nations or European Union bodies. At present, such activities, mainly those relating to the provision of food, health care or education, are taking place in 13 countries.

In conclusion, I would like to share the optimism of our Secretary-General, to whom I pay an emphatic tribute for encouraging us, in paragraph 53 of his report on the impact of globalization on social development (A/AC.253/25),

> "to 'manage' the process of globalization better so as to minimize its negative effects, make the opportunities provided by globalization available to all and spread its benefits wider".

My country has chosen that path, and, through me, it reaffirms its total attachment to the decisions of the Copenhagen Summit and the conclusions that are to be adopted on Friday at this special session.

The President: I thank the Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Ali Najafi, Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): This special session is indeed a unique opportunity to take stock of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, evaluate the accomplishments made thus far and the obstacles encountered along the way, identify the challenges ahead, and agree on a set of further initiatives and practical measures to meet these challenges and ensure a more effective drive towards social development. Indeed, the Copenhagen Summit dealt with the most comprehensive issues and produced a new global social contract.

The review and assessment of the implementation of the Copenhagen outcome clearly presents a mixed picture. Despite modest advances in some areas and the initiation of many new national policies and programmes in various societies, the overall result has been much less than satisfactory. The most striking area of disparity between the objectives and reality is the inequality within and among States, which continues to grow. Effectively combating social ills and achieving genuine long-term social development depends on organizing a meaningful global drive against want and poverty. Such a drive calls for an international economic environment conducive to a

more balanced distribution of wealth; a rule-based, non-discriminatory multilateral trading system; market access; debt relief; and a more responsive international financial system. Humanizing overall economic policy reforms is imperative for the creation of a genuinely caring society.

The intensity of the still ongoing negotiations on the text of the final outcome of this review conference is a clear indication of the challenges we all face in the international community in the implementation of the Copenhagen consensus. Moreover, it is also indicative of the contention between the countries of the developing world and their developed partners with regard to their respective areas and order of priorities. The process of globalization, despite its promises of new opportunities, has, as a matter of fact, made the implementation of the Copenhagen outcome much more difficult for most developing societies. The present conference should devote itself to arriving at a consensus on those further initiatives that will contribute to the more effective and meaningful implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and Programme of Action.

Let me now turn to the national scene. Having actively participated in the Copenhagen Summit and made a contribution to its final outcome, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has vigorously pursued the implementation of the outcome and accorded high priority to the objectives of social development. A substantial improvement in the past few years in the indices of social services, including in the field of education at all levels, access to basic health services and access to safe drinking water, is indicative of the progress achieved thus far, as well as the potential for further betterment. At a more general level, the third five-year national development plan for 2000-2004 has been designed to institute reforms in various social and economic fields, and contains a strong orientation towards social development. The plan's implementation is to be facilitated by policy development, the promulgation of necessary legislation and the allocation of requisite resources.

The promotion of overall social development has been an integral part of the policy of President Khatami's Administration since it took office in August 1997. The Government's policy, devoted to institutionalizing the rule of law, the promotion of accountability and transparency, the improvement of governance at all levels and the expansion and strengthening of the status and role of civil society at the national level, has contributed to the process of social development in Iran. The popular reform process, which is still under way within Iranian society and is aimed at transforming various aspects and dimensions of our social and political life in the framework of the Constitution, shows the depth and reach of our nation's collective drive towards social development and social justice. The three recent popular elections held in Iran since 1997, in which the reform platform triumphed, are also clear indications of the national will, as well as of the Government's dedication to the attainment of social development.

In our view, achievement of social development calls for the resolute will and determination of the entire human community. It requires action at the national level and cooperation at the international level. It goes without saying that the attainment of social development depends primarily on conflict resolution and on the establishment and maintenance of peace at the global scale. If history is any indication, long-term peace and stability, as the very prerequisites of social development, can be achieved only through tolerance and understanding among all societies, cultures and peoples. The belief that dialogue among civilizations, as proposed by President Khatami and endorsed by the General Assembly, premised on the central notion of cultural diversity, constitutes the appropriate framework for reaching such an understanding.

The Chairman: I thank the Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Isaias Rodriguez, Vice-President of the Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Rodríguez (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The times in which we live demand a new form of social expression, in which the individual is both the subject and the object of development, and in which security assumes its proper dimension, not through the use of force or weapons, but through the eradication of poverty, discrimination, human rights violations, inequality and unemployment.

Poverty, marginalization and weaknesses in the health, education and judicial administration systems emphasize the deep-rooted social inequalities that hinder the development and growth of our peoples. These are the major challenges that Governments must

meet in order to contribute to resolving the major social problems we face as countries individually and as the international community as a whole.

For that reason, we have come to this special session to reaffirm and renew our commitment to the objectives established five years ago at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development.

In this spirit, the national Government of Venezuela considers the individual, as both the subject and the object of development, to be the fundamental component of our social policy. Our commitment is to poverty eradication, education, health care and the creation of productive employment. The quest for social development is not only geared towards correcting the existing distortions in our societies, clearly evident in marginalization and social injustice. It is also directed at the full development of citizens in aspects related to the exercise of democracy.

The participation of the population in matters concerning them is a basic component in the building of a real democracy that seeks prosperity for all, without disregarding the most vulnerable groups in the process. For the Republic of Venezuela, participative democracy is one of the four cardinal points and, at the same time, the culmination of social development.

All this government activity is included in the country's new political plan, which entered into force with the adoption of the new Constitution of Venezuela. The Constitution addresses the rights inherent to social development and provides guarantees for full multi-ethnic and gender equality. It states, in article 3,

> "The essential goals of the State are the defence and the development of the individual and full respect for his or her dignity; the democratic exercise of popular will; the construction of a just and peace-loving society; the promotion of the prosperity and well-being of the people; and the guarantee of the fulfilment of the principles, rights and duties set forth in this Constitution. Education and employment are the fundamental processes for achieving these objectives."

In this context, the Government of President Hugo Chávez Frías has favoured a change in relations between the State and the population to enable a greater level of participation by civil society organizations and the transfer of financial resources to local communities.

Thus, we envisage the creation of a regional, municipal and local social network to strengthen and ensure coordination and management in the social domain, geared towards the prompt implementation of a series of measures to restore the basic human rights of the sectors of the population subject to the greatest degree of social exclusion: families in a state of extreme poverty, indigence, abandonment, social risk and people who do not benefit from the existing social support networks, including children, adolescents, immigrants and female heads of household in urban, rural, border and indigenous areas.

Within this support framework, we have designed projects to complement social priority policies in Venezuela, including the national system for beneficiary selection, conceived as a system to direct resources to the more vulnerable households and families through flexible, modern, transparent and decentralized mechanisms, and the system to follow up and evaluate social policies and programmes, in order to strengthen, by systematizing the follow-up and evaluation process, the effectiveness and efficiency of public policies.

Bearing in mind the commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development, the Government has adopted a set of actions and measures, among them a body of laws designed to provide for the full protection of children and adolescents, to guarantee equal opportunity for women and to regulate the health subsystem and the pension system.

Programmes have also been created and implemented to meet the specific needs of various groups of society. These include the comprehensive network for the protection of children and adolescents, the abandoned minors and minors-at-risk care network, the youth training, employment and vocational training programme and the child and adolescent protection and social rehabilitation programme.

We have also created programmes to help the lowest income groups, which offer services and products at affordable prices. Examples include the unified savings programme and the projects for cooperative supply centres, a programme to foster and support the establishment of microenterprises, a programme to strengthen the in-patient network by establishing comprehensive treatment, a programme to

strengthen control of endemic epidemics, a programme to foster and support citizens' participation in health-care management and support programmes for private and public/private organizations, such as Hogares CREA, a bone-marrow transplant foundation.

In spite of the efforts our Government has been making, debt servicing in Venezuela continues to eat into resources that could otherwise be used for programmes to eradicate poverty and to create productive employment. This heavy burden has to a great extent restricted our ability to promote social development.

Venezuela has met, and is meeting, its commitments in servicing its debt, and it has been bearing the enormous social cost that this involves. We hope that the international community will adopt measures that will make it possible to find a solution to the debt problem and the debt-servicing burden for developing countries.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that we need to have a stronger international financial system, one that is more stable, more democratic and more transparent, one that will help us tackle in a more timely and effective manner the new development challenges that face us as world financial systems become more integrated. Otherwise, financial and economic vulnerabilities will persist, as will technological and social marginalization, a solution to which is essential for social development that will promote the real growth our peoples want so much.

There is no doubt that we live in an increasingly interdependent world where changes are being brought about by technological innovation in the setting of an accelerated process of globalization. In this regard, we must not lose sight of what should be the essential targets of this process: human beings, their well-being, their development, their participation in matters that concern them.

Globalization should further social equilibrium; it should not deepen social inequalities. It is an ongoing process with both advantages and disadvantages. Many of the developing countries have, unfortunately, missed out on the advantages of globalization, yet the developing countries have also had to deal with the disadvantages accompanying globalization, which have left these countries' vulnerabilities even more exposed. This is why we must, as a matter of urgency, seek alternatives that will help us to correct the negative effects created by globalization so that its benefits reach all countries in the world and all members of society.

As a result of the climatic phenomenon that hit my country in December 1999, causing floods that left approximately 50,000 people dead, and many thousands otherwise seriously affected, a series of programmes were developed to tackle the emergency situation. These have been effective, although many of them are temporary. Nevertheless, this situation was a serious setback to the efforts we had been making to promote social development, not only in the areas directly affected but throughout the country. Assistance by the international community to Venezuela at a time of such great suffering was, and continues to be, highly appreciated by all Venezuelans.

We cannot continue to disregard the fundamental role that social development should be playing in our agendas. Specifically, we need to enhance cooperation and the institutions dealing with social matters in order to achieve economic growth based on social harmony, a result of qualitative development.

This is an ongoing process that requires the adoption of appropriate policies and the resources necessary for their implementation, as well as constant assessment to ensure their effectiveness. In this connection I would like to highlight the role of the United Nations, not only as the setting for the initiative that led to a consensus on social development and its fundamental role in the well-being of our societies, but also as an instrument to follow up on the commitments made, in the belief that the fulfilment of those commitments will be a step forward towards peace, security, stability and justice.

The Republic of Venezuela would like to take this opportunity to reiterate here in this forum its commitment to the individual human being as the centre of our public policy and to the drawing up of strategies to achieve and consolidate progress and well-being for our peoples.

The President: I thank the Vice-President of the Republic of Venezuela for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Jean-François Ntoutoume-Emane, Prime Minister of the Gabonese Republic.

Mr. Ntoutoume-Emane (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, on behalf of El Hadj Omar

Bongo, President of the Republic and head of State, on behalf of his Government and the whole of the Gabonese people, it is my pleasure to extend to you our warm congratulations on your election to guide the work of this special session of the General Assembly. Being familiar with your great experience and the efficiency and skill with which you have conducted the work of the fifty-fourth regular session of the General Assembly, I can have no doubt that you will do everything to ensure that this special session will reach a successful outcome. I take this opportunity also to express my warm appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the vast amount of excellent work that has been done to prepare for this special session. Finally, in the same spirit, for the quality of the welcome extended to us, I would like to express my warm thanks to the Government and the people of Switzerland for their kind hospitality.

Five years ago, the Copenhagen Summit took place. For five years, therefore, we have been believing that the commitments made should be respected. But today we have to say in truth that, in view of what has been achieved as compared with the commitments assumed, the results are mixed. Since then, difficult times have been holding back the work of a number of Governments, among them those of the third world and, more particularly, those of Africa. This situation, which has struck my country, Gabon, with its full force and is compounded by our heavy indebtedness, has led us to turn to the Bretton Woods institutions. Together with them, the Government has defined priority objectives in its struggle against poverty, the main components of which are the struggle against unemployment, social integration, the promotion of women, access to high-quality education and good health care for all.

To ensure the social integration of the vulnerable sectors of its population, the Government has taken a number of actions. Our country is harmonizing its activities to ensure greater efficiency in this area of social policy. In keeping with a decree dating from January 1995 on health policies in Gabon, a national health plan was elaborated whose aim is to improve health-care coverage throughout our territory while giving priority to maternal and child health.

To ensure that our actions are fully successful, the Government is emphasizing the pivotal role of education in the process of the economic development of our country. That is why our national multisectoral programme, which focuses on information, education and communication and which is financed by the Government and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and carried out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), should be pursued and developed.

Finally, to give as many people as possible access to electricity and drinking water, the Government has introduced a favourable tariff policy and is implementing a programme that will provide water to villages.

However, these actions are being carried out in a situation of economic crisis. In this respect, we wish to emphasize that today my country, Gabon, is the only intermediate-income country south of the Sahara and therefore is not eligible for support initiatives to combat poverty. This classification — which is based on parameters which, as everyone knows, are highly questionable — has placed us at a considerable disadvantage in terms of our social situation with respect to the ideals of solidarity and equity — the two cardinal values that guide the missions and activities of the United Nations.

However, the personal commitment of El Hadj Omar Bongo, our head of State, to ensure the gradual elimination of the main obstacles to human development and to the maintenance of social peace prompted Gabon to host an African summit on the African agenda, on 18 and 19 January last, under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which addressed the issues of economic growth and the reduction of poverty at the dawn of the third millennium.

That meeting allowed for a rich exchange of views and led to a reaffirmation by the heads of State and Government of the objective of combating poverty through sustained and durable economic growth.

We note with regret, however, that despite this determination — which, unfortunately, is undermined by a difficult economic context — a great deal remains to do to fully achieve the goals set at Copenhagen. Indeed, with respect to the objectives set out by the 20/20 Initiative, the budgetary allocations made in recent years to the social sectors are, although encouraging, still insufficient.

It is therefore vital to mobilize further resources to benefit these sectors so as to ensure that monies are

effectively spent and to provide the population optimum access to basic social services. In this respect, we wish to express our deep satisfaction at the support provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) since 1997 in the framework of the social planning project. This project will help to create a reliable data base and lead to a genuine reform in the sector through targeted and effective actions.

It is not hard, therefore, to understand the determination of my country to continue to work for social advancement, despite the major obstacle posed by the debt burden.

The debt problem must therefore be considered not only in terms of socio-economic indicators but also in the framework of a country's efforts to combat poverty. Let me emphatically recall that today the debt burden, like poverty itself — of which it is one of the main determining factors — represents a continuing threat to the political stability of our States.

It was in this spirit that Gabon, through its head of State, President Bongo, said at Copenhagen that only active solidarity among nations could give credibility to our work. The time has come finally to translate into reality the commitments undertaken with respect to official development assistance. The objective of allocating 0.7 per cent of the gross domestic product of the rich countries to that assistance has not been achieved. Indeed, we have even seen that trend reversed.

The far-reaching changes of all kinds that are taking place throughout the world are posing challenges that must be met in order to achieve a new order that is based mainly on competitiveness and the interdependence of nations. This will require concerted mobilization and ongoing awareness on the part of the international community.

I believe that this meeting will have achieved its aim if it can strengthen our common conviction that a harmonious future for our planet is an absolute necessity.

For its part, and within the means at is disposal, Gabon is working resolutely to continue to consolidate the gains it has made in the social arena, which have made it an island of political stability in the Central African subregion, and to strengthen international cooperation with a view to ensuring more equitable development for all of the peoples of the world.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Gabonese Republic.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Frederick Chiluba, President of the Republic of Zambia.

President Chiluba: On behalf of the people of Zambia, I would like to join all the previous speakers in extending our very warm and hearty appreciation to the United Nations for facilitating this very important gathering, intended to focus world attention on the issues of social development.

This gathering offers us a rare window of opportunity to think afresh and create new strategies towards a new world community, free from poverty, hunger and social deprivation, because these are conditions well within humanity's means to eradicate, if given a sense of purpose and commitment.

This gathering should therefore seize this opportunity to deal comprehensively and decisively with the man-made inequalities prevailing in our global economic system and structures that have consigned millions of people to abject poverty and extreme privation, while a lucky few enjoy unparalleled affluence. Neither God nor nature has ordained this order. This is an order created by man through a deliberate process of commission and omission.

In 1995, the world gathered to formulate the Copenhagen commitments, which principally focused on eradicating poverty, seeking full and sustainable employment and ensuring social integration. Those principles are still as important today as they were then. However, in spite of the commitment made in Copenhagen, poverty continues to afflict the majority of people in developing countries. Unemployment and underemployment characterize our economic endeavours, especially in the informal sector.

The need for social inclusive development needs no emphasis. Good governance, the full participation of civil society and ensuring that political and legal frameworks are people-centred must be the cornerstones of our development efforts.

This review and appraisal are taking place against the background of declining terms of trade for most developing countries, especially in Africa, and dwindling inflows of concessional financial resources. This situation has a particularly devastating effect on Zambia. Zambia's ability to service its external debt

continues to decline, thus limiting the capacity to deliver on social development. Zambia is placed in an exceptionally difficult position geopolitically. We are exposed to sudden external shocks, such as regional conflicts, increases in international oil prices, declines in copper prices, harsh weather patterns and financial crises. We need to develop capacities in these areas to enable us to anticipate, prevent and offset negative social and economic consequences through effective national, regional and international strategies.

My country has accorded the eradication of poverty the highest priority. We have formulated a national poverty-reduction action plan together with our cooperating partners in civil society. But our efforts, however noble, will remain mere visions for as long as the underlying causes of the condition are not addressed. Poverty in Africa and many third world countries is not an accident. It is the result of a prolonged, systemic campaign of emasculation that has characterized our economic and political interaction. It is a relationship in which economic self-interest has overtaken reason and morality. It is a relationship devoid of compassion and empathy. Indeed, it is a relationship that builds on and reinforces inequality and poverty.

Development aid has failed to impact the areas of critical concern in the field of social mobilization and economic upliftment. Aid should ideally focus on enabling the people to develop capacities to implement development and social change. In addition, aid should ideally empower the poor to enter and participate effectively at the global level. This has not been the case. The status quo not only has been maintained, but continues to be reinforced.

Lest I be misunderstood, let me state that my country appreciates official development assistance given by our cooperating partners. We further appreciate the efforts being made towards the achievement of the target of 0.7 per cent of the gross domestic product of developed countries being allocated to official development assistance.

While it is accepted, though, that a significant percentage of official development assistance should be directed towards Africa, it is the nature of this aid that needs to be reviewed. There is a need to rethink the philosophy of aid in order to create a support model that emphasizes capacity-building through the holistic enhancement of the economic, social and political capacities of new and emerging democracies that are confronted with crises of expectation that result in social crisis or, indeed, in total anarchy and national disintegration in some cases.

There is, indeed, no excuse for the instability that continues to plague the African continent, nor is there a rational explanation for its occurrence. Suffice it to observe that economic deprivation is a root of political instability.

Despite the difficulties that my country has faced in achieving the Copenhagen commitments, we in Zambia remain committed to the policy and principle of social development. Indeed, I recognize that internal factors have contributed to the low achievement in social development in Africa, but the world needs to focus more attention on ensuring that the external environment is pro-social development.

It is my hope and vision that this special session will provide a new impetus towards the elimination of obstacles that have prevented the full attainment of the cause of Copenhagen. It is not my intention to place blame on the international economic system, but merely to state possible areas of action for further initiatives to make Copenhagen a reality not only for us, but also for our children and their children after them.

My country has, in the past, had occasion to express the need for a just world order and international financial and trade institutions. We need to ensure that our world institutions focus on poverty eradication. If the instruments governing multilateral donor institutions have become a barrier to ensuring the social-development orientation of structural adjustment programmes, perhaps the international community could consider urgent and appropriate remedial action before these programmes become instruments for further impoverishment.

The debt overhang continues to plague many developing countries, especially in Africa. The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative is a welcome Initiative. However, in the case of Zambia, it has been recognized that, for social development to take place, we need more than HIPC. We need to ease the conditions for HIPC accession, such as the length of completion, and also to consider complete debt cancellation. This will enable us effectively to contribute to our share of the implementation of the 20/20 initiative and ensure that resource mobilization

for social development is operationalized. This will no doubt enhance our capacity to address hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity.

The lack of wage employment continues to affect the poorest of the poor. Women and children have been affected the most, thus being driven into exploitative forms of work, including commercial sex, child labour and criminal activity. My Government considers the participation of persons from all areas of society to be critical in attaining sustainable development. Persons who are sight- and hearing-impaired, as well as the physically impaired and children, are challenged in extremely difficult circumstances. All need to be part of our development vision.

As a result of the marginalization of women and children in economic, social and political decision-making structures, my Government has been working closely with our cooperating partners and community-based and non-governmental organizations to socially integrate disadvantaged sections of our society. The challenge of social integration continues to occupy the Zambian people, but the vision to integrate is clear and moving towards fulfilment. My Government believes that, in order for sustainable human development to take place, people have to be empowered. Universal primary education and primary health care are key in this regard. My Government continues to ensure that basic social services are provided to all who need them. This is a long-term goal whose urgency needs no emphasis.

The issue of gender equity is paramount for any sustainable development process. Recognizing this, my Government has put in place a national gender policy with a view to mainstreaming gender issues, especially for disadvantaged women, in all our national development programmes. The coordination of all gender programming has been accorded high priority with the placement of the Gender in Development Division at the cabinet level. My Government continues to work towards the attainment of gender equity in the provision of basic social services and the distribution of income.

We are not here to renegotiate Copenhagen but to ensure the elimination of obstacles in its implementation through further initiatives. It is my sincere hope that this special session will refocus world attention on the pertinent issues that have impeded social development at the global level and also at individual country levels.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Zambia for his statement.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Astrid Fischel, Vice-President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Mrs. Fischel (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Costa Rica, and in particular on behalf of the President, Miguel Angel Rodriguez, I would like to express our warmest and most respectful greetings. I would also like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, to the Preparatory Committee and to the various working groups for the very arduous work they have done to produce what I must say is excellent basic documentation and to organize so very well this special session.

When President Rodriguez took over as President in May 1998 he emphasized his commitment to devoting his Government to human development, to working every day to ensure that Costa Rica progressed, to fighting for the kind of growth that would enable all Costa Rican men and women to achieve a higher level of well-being. In a nutshell, he committed himself to governing with the people and for the people. This vision of government has allowed for the elaboration of a development policy based on social objectives.

Inspired by the Copenhagen Summit, we have also been able to achieve very satisfactory economic growth rates. For example, in two years we have experienced growth of 15.6 per cent, our highest rate in the last 38 years. Our unemployment rates are also encouraging, the current rate being 5 per cent, with underemployment at 7 per cent.

Our employment policies have also been influenced by the major wave of immigration from other Central American countries, particularly from Nicaragua. Such immigrants now make up approximately 13 per cent of the total population of Costa Rica. This figure has increased as a result of the natural disasters that have affected the region in recent years, exerting considerable pressure not only on the labour market, but also on the health, education and public housing systems.

This year, Costa Rica celebrated with pride the fiftieth anniversary of Costa Rican women gaining the right to vote. The last significant reform in this regard was made in 1996, at which time we passed legislation making it mandatory to establish quotas for women on the party lists of candidates for Parliament and for local government. At present both of the Vice-Presidents of Costa Rica, the President of the Legislative Assembly, and the President of one of the two major political parties in Costa Rica are women.

In the last decade our country has developed new strategies to meet its social-development objectives and to tackle poverty head-on. This has enabled us in the last decade to reduce the number of families living in undignified conditions from 30 to 20 per cent. To a great extent this is due to our investment in the social sector, where approximately 18 per cent of our gross domestic product is invested.

During President Rodriguez's tenure, one of the most important steps we have taken is to draw up a solidarity plan. This plan is directed at combating poverty and includes, inter alia, the following important goals. First is the revision of our social programmes so as to identify possible areas of duplication and thus to promote institutional specialization. The second action is to revise the objectives and tools of the fund for social development and family allowances, which is financed by our own domestic resources in the amount of some $200 million per year.

Thirdly, we want to implement our objective population information system, which is a census of the potential recipients of social benefits. The purpose is to eliminate politicking and cronyism in the identification of who most needs the benefits. Fourthly, in the area of social policy, we are also implementing the equity in education programme which has enabled us to significantly reduce school drop-out and repetition rates. It has also enabled us to increase the availability of pre-school education and secondary education. Fifthly, as regards health, we are pleased to have achieved an overall mortality rate of 3.9 per thousand, an infant mortality rate of 11.7 per cent and a life expectancy at birth of 76.7 years.

Another important and innovative project of the current Administration is the strategy called the Solidarity Triangle. Its purpose is to build a society based on opportunity through improving living standards. We hope to achieve this by increasing the involvement of the population, with faith in the ability of each individual to be creative and to exercise freedom with responsibility. The Solidarity Triangle was designed as a means of promoting a culture of participation, through which the communities, local governments and national Government institutions can work together in making decisions and in taking actions that will continuously improve the living standards of all Costa Rican men and women.

Such actions have been taken as the result of the conjunction of two processes. One of these is involving and consulting the people, which turns them from passive beneficiaries of State assistance into active participants in their own development. The other process is strengthening local government and speeding up the process of decentralization, thus increasing local technical and economic capacities.

The Solidarity Triangle enables our citizens to become overseers of the implementation of projects at the local level: they ensure ethical behaviour on the part of the public authorities, and thus guarantee consistent accountability.

The Solidarity Triangle is a public policy that has been structured in such a way as to promote the development of all Costa Ricans and to attempt to consolidate efforts and aspirations to produce a more just society in both the economic and social areas, without discrimination with regard to gender, ethnicity, culture or age. In such a society the participation of citizens would be strengthened and political action, in the broadest sense of the term, would be established.

Our society's historical goals have not changed. Our hopes for shared growth, social solidarity and the progress of families are guiding themes of our national agenda. Costa Rica continues to be fundamentally and permanently committed to human development. The levels we have attained have been the result of many decades of effort made upon the foundations of deepening the democratic process, investment in education and health and the absence of a military for over 50 years. Our vision is neither unilateral nor isolationist. Rather, it forms part of the recognition of the fact that actions undertaken to achieve the highest social and economic objectives should be framed within the context of the development of the Central American region.

I would like to conclude by wishing the various working groups and the Bureau my country's best wishes for achieving the best results possible in the work begun today by the special session. Those results should make it possible to reach the ideal of a worthy life for everyone in all our countries.

The President: I thank the Vice-President of the Republic of Costa Rica for her statement.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Valentina Matvienko, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation.

Mrs. Matvienko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): It is a great honour for me to address such a high-level forum convened at the dawn of the new millennium to continue the dialogue on strategic priorities of social development, initiated in Copenhagen.

This special session of the General Assembly gives the international community yet another chance to learn the lessons of the unprecedented social and economic shocks of the twentieth century and to pave the way through joint efforts towards sustainable development and prosperity for humanity.

The Secretary-General's comprehensive report on the results of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development clearly shows that we have not yet made a breakthrough in achieving its agenda. The radical changes in ways of life brought about by globalization do not provide remedies for old social problems, but instead create new risks and challenges. The threat of global disaster as a result of nuclear confrontation has been replaced by such abhorrent realities as transnational terrorism and organized crime, militant separatism and inter-ethnic division, illicit trafficking in arms and narcotic drugs and many other acute problems.

Not all countries have gained access to the achievements of scientific and technological progress. A limited number of countries, where the so-called golden billion of the world's population live, have reached a new level of prosperity. The majority of other States did not manage to reach a higher standard of living in the twentieth century and are only now approaching the frontiers of post-industrial society. The gap between the world's richest and poorest is widening.

To overcome this trend we must redesign the entire modern architecture of international relations. The social component must be more clearly reflected in the activities of international financial and economic organization. Our common goal is to make globalization a tool for enhancing social and economic progress so that all countries may enjoy its benefits. The United Nations should be a key element in achieving this goal. Russia stands for, and will continue to stand for, enhancing the role and strengthening the authority of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, including, inter alia, in the field of social and economic cooperation. We are convinced that social development issues should continue to be among the top priorities on the United Nations agenda in the years ahead.

Recently, countries with economies in transition have been having more and more influence on world developments. These countries are strongly determined to overcome the social costs of transition, to eradicate poverty, to achieve full employment and to strengthen social integration. However, their efforts have not yet met with an adequate response from the international community.

The comprehensive report of the Secretary-General gives a description of the deterioration of the socio-economic situation in Eastern and Central Europe and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), but it gives no answer to the question of what additional measures should be taken at the international level to prevent the social exclusion of millions of people in that region. Russia believes that it is high time to hold a large-scale, high-level regional conference under United Nations auspices to discuss the problems of social development in countries with economies in transition. Such a conference should focus on searching for new resources for these aims. This forum should be attended by representatives of United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and interested donors. Such a conference could be convened in Russia in 2002-2003. I hope that this initiative will receive a favourable response from all the participants of the special session, and especially from the leaders of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS who are present at this forum.

There are few countries that have suffered as many tragic developments in the twentieth century as

Russia. We are fully aware that Russia is no longer able to survive yet another social shock or radical restructuring. The Russian Government is now concluding the drafting of a long-term national development strategy aimed at overcoming the consequences of the recent crisis and at creating a favourable environment for effective social and economic growth. The new programme of social and economic reforms is scheduled for consideration at the next meeting of the cabinet, in which I plan to participate immediately upon my return to Moscow.

In drafting the new strategic course, the Russian authorities have taken due account of the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted in Copenhagen. By taking into consideration the decisions of the Social Summit, we have significantly increased the efficiency of social policy. As of now, the social protection of the population is target-oriented. State support is being provided precisely to those who are in need of it. In combating unemployment, priority is given to the development of active employment programmes aimed at adapting people to the demands of the labour market.

Russia possesses not only rich natural resources and great energy reserves; our main wealth is our invaluable human capital. That is why the Russian Government has made its top priority to increase the incomes and the standards of living of the Russian people and to ensure worthy living conditions. We must stabilize the political situation and ensure economic growth and financial development, which will make it possible to make progress.

Last year the salaries of teachers and doctors increased 150 per cent. Although we have of course not yet reached the proper levels, we are in a transitional stage and we will continue to increase budgetary allocations to develop the social protection, education, health and culture systems. The State budget for the year 2000 provides for significant increases in public social spending.

Yet another task of the Russian Government, closely connected with finding solutions for social development problems, is that of the continuous integration of the Russian economy into the world's economic structures. To achieve this goal, we will actively support Russian businessmen, strongly oppose discrimination against Russia in the world's commodity, services and investment markets and strive for access to the World Trade Organization.

To fully achieve the agenda of the Social Summit, all nations have to work together. Only by joining our efforts can we duly respond to the challenges of our time and find reasonable solutions for the global problems facing humanity. I believe that together we shall succeed in achieving the noble goal of making the twenty-first century an era of social partnership and economic prosperity.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues, Minister of Labour and Solidarity of Portugal.

Mr. Ferro Rodrigues (Portugal) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — the associated countries, Cyprus and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Association country, Iceland, have expressed the wish to align themselves with this statement.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General and to the Division for Social Policy and Development for the excellent preparatory work undertaken before this special session, as well as to the Chairmen of the Preparatory Committee and of all the working groups for their untiring efforts in the negotiating process. A word of gratitude is also deserved by the Swiss Government for hosting this special session.

Five years ago at the World Summit for Social Development, heads of State or Government committed themselves and their countries to the principle of a society for all, placing the human being at the centre of development. The principle remains valid even if in the last five years the world has faced a number of new challenges with an impact on social development. Globalization, economic crises and an evolving, new economic order all require rapid solutions.

The review and appraisal of the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments since 1995 have shown that some progress has been achieved; however, it has been uneven, and further initiatives are required. We welcome the increasingly widespread recognition, including by the international financial institutions, of the critical importance of full implementation of the Copenhagen commitments for achieving the international development targets.

In the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights, to which the European Union is deeply committed, it was recognized in paragraph 8 that

> "Democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing."

The creation of a political, legal and economic environment that will enable people to achieve social development is of paramount importance. Sustainable social development can take place only within a political environment of good governance.

The Lisbon European Council of March 2000 designated a new strategic goal for the European Union in the next decade: to become a more competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The achievement of this goal requires an overall strategy to regain the conditions for full, productive and dignified employment.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The European Union wishes to take the opportunity to briefly underline some of the key issues for the future and to reinforce the need for coordinated follow-up of the relevant United Nations conferences and summits of the last decade, particularly of the very recent General Assembly special session entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

The European Union wishes to stress the fundamental contribution of women to social development and their essential role for poverty eradication. The Beijing Platform for Action, supplemented by the initiatives agreed at the above-mentioned special session, together with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, remains the cornerstone in the pursuit of gender equality. Gender equality is a men's as well as a women's responsibility. States must shoulder their obligation to end discrimination and violence against women and to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We reiterate our commitment to halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by the year 2015; this must remain an overarching target of the global community, and we warmly welcome the fact that this special session will formally endorse it.

The respect, promotion and realization of the principles contained in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its follow-up are a fundamental prerequisite for social and economic development. Universal ratification and full implementation of the ILO core conventions concerning basic workers' rights are therefore of the utmost importance. The European Union considers the achievement of the goal of full employment and decent work for all a basic priority for poverty eradication and social inclusion.

The international community needs to identify those key aspects of social policy that underpin economic development in a globalizing world and to begin to develop a framework of social principles to ensure that the goals of Copenhagen are integrated into national and international policy-making.

Inclusive societies, based on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunities, solidarity and participation of all members, should ensure universal access to basic social services and specific protection measures for disadvantaged and vulnerable persons and groups.

Investment in education and health produces better socio-economic results that any other investment. The recent Framework for Action for Education for All, adopted in Dakar, has established goals to which the European Union is fully committed. It is also committed to lifelong learning as an essential tool for facing the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Health promotion and disease prevention require the improved performance of health-care systems, particularly in fighting easily preventable epidemic diseases such as polio and measles, and epidemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as malaria and tuberculosis; in providing information and services for sexual and reproductive health; and in making available essential medicines.

The significant increase and more efficient utilization of the resources allocated to social development require renewed national and international efforts. The European Union is committed

to the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance. Its member States will continue to strive to attain that target, which has already been reached by some members. Recognizing the social impact of the debt burden for many countries, the European Union will strive to ensure the full and speedy implementation of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. Debt relief measures should make available more local resources for poverty reduction and productive purposes. Concerted national and international efforts to facilitate the integration of Africa and the least developed countries into the global economy and to promote their participation in the multilateral trading system need to be reinforced in the coming years.

In order to monitor, evaluate and measure what we have achieved and what is yet to be achieved, we need to consolidate a coherent set of generally accepted indicators at national and international levels. The relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, especially the United Nations Development Programme, the Bretton Woods institutions and other international organizations, such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, should further support efforts to draw up relevant social development indicators. In this context, the Lisbon European Council reaffirmed the need to further develop quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks in the fields of employment and social protection.

While recognizing the primary responsibility of Governments in promoting social development, the European Union considers that the participation of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and other actors, in a broad-based dialogue is a fundamental tool for the full achievement of the Copenhagen goals. The European Union also stresses the importance of the corporate responsibility of the private sector in the implementation of these goals. The European Union is pleased to acknowledge that since 1995 dialogue has been established between civil society and the United Nations organizations, as well as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The European Union remains strongly committed to the Copenhagen Programme of Action, as it still provides solid ground for national and international policies, in order to achieve the ultimate goal of people-centred sustainable development for a more just and stable world. However, its implementation needs to be strengthened and must be more results-oriented.

This is our challenge at this special session and beyond.

The Acting President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Mozammel Hossain, State Minister for Social Welfare of Bangladesh.

Mr. Hossain (Bangladesh): May I begin, Mr. President, by reaffirming that we have every confidence in your ability to lead our deliberations to success.

The Father of the Nation of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, had a vision of a Golden Bengal where every citizen lived in dignity, free from the scourges of poverty, illiteracy, homelessness and hunger. We continue to be inspired by his vision in our efforts to uphold the basic rights of our people in the face of daunting challenges. Our present Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, places high priority upon social development. While I shall share part of our experience with the Assembly, the rest is contained in the Bangladesh country paper that is being circulated.

As a follow-up to the Copenhagen Summit, a national Plan of Action within the framework of the country's fifth five-year plan was adopted. A National Committee, comprising representatives of relevant ministries of the Government, as well as of civil society, was established in 1996 to implement the national Plan of Action. Specific time-bound programmes were adopted to implement the Summit goals. Bangladesh has, in fact, gone beyond fulfilment of the 20/20 initiative. About 40 per cent of the total allocation of resources of the annual development programme is now devoted to social sectors.

We have made poverty eradication, expansion of productive employment and social integration our focused priority. Almost 42 per cent of the total allocation of the current annual development programmed is devoted to agriculture, rural development, social welfare, youth development, primary education and health sectors. Anti-poverty programmes include the Ashrayan, which are projects for the homeless, the Vulnerable Group Development Programme, food for work, food for education, special projects for the disabled and allowances for distressed widows and the aged.

The success of the microcredit programme in Bangladesh is well known. The programme is not only geared towards poverty eradication, but it also has a significant impact on the empowerment of women in Bangladesh. The Microcredit Summit, which was co-chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Washington in February 1997, recognized microcredit as a key strategy for achieving the goals of the World Summit for Social Development. The Summit endorsed a global campaign to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families with credit for self-employment by the year 2005.

Bangladesh has been espousing the cause of social development in all major international forums, including at the recently held General Assembly special session on Beijing+5. At the regional level, Bangladesh is also actively committed to the objectives of the Dhaka Declaration for poverty eradication, adopted by the countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, aimed at eradicating poverty from South Asia, preferably by 2002.

We have placed special emphasis on the generation of productive employment. A comprehensive employment strategy has been included in our fifth five-year plan.

Social integration is a constitutional commitment for Bangladesh. Particular emphasis is given to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of society. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord, which brought an end to decades-long insurgency, has also paved the way for greater integration of the tribal population in the national mainstream.

It is yet too early to draw absolute conclusions about the effect of the World Summit for Social Development follow-up actions on the socio-economic indicators of Bangladesh. However, there is enough evidence to indicate that increased allocation in the social sector has contributed significantly to the attainment of the Summit goals. To give some examples, our population growth rate dropped from 1.81 per cent in 1995 to 1.5 per cent in 1998; adult literacy increased to 58 per cent in 1998 from 43.2 per cent in 1995; and 44.7 per cent of the population was living below the poverty line in 1999, compared to more than 47.9 per cent in 1996.

The creation of an enabling environment for social development cannot be achieved successfully without the collective commitment of the international community. The Copenhagen Summit made a specific commitment for strengthening international, regional and subregional cooperation for social development.

There has not been much progress in fulfilling the agreed target of earmarking 0.15 per cent to 0.2 per cent of gross national product as official development assistance for the least developed countries. Most least developed countries continue to confront problems of access to markets, decline in foreign direct investment and technology transfer. Unless urgent steps are taken, the goals of social development will remain elusive for most least developed countries.

Encouraging though some achievements may appear, much more remains to be done. As we identify new initiatives at the special session we would like to recommend the following.

First, the Economic and Social Council, as the body primarily responsible for coordinating international efforts in the follow-up to the United Nations conferences, including the World Summit for Social Development, needs to be further strengthened and made more effective through fostering a closer working relationship with its subsidiary bodies and the United Nations funds and programmes, as well as with the specialized agencies of the United Nations.

Secondly, it is essential to have regular interaction among the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and United Nations Member States to establish effective partnership for social development.

Thirdly, commitments must be renewed, including through adequate resource mobilization and allocation and transfer of technology, to achieve the Summit goals for developing countries, particularly for the least developed countries.

Fourthly, official development assistance targets must be fulfilled, with special attention to the least developed countries and to effective implementation of the 20/20 initiative aimed at ensuring increased resources for social development.

Fifth, a globalization fund should be set up to finance the social development programmes to address the problems arising out of globalization.

The Copenhagen Summit placed social development at the centre of the global political

agenda, and it is our firm conviction that, given the necessary political will and our collective efforts, we should be able to achieve the goals of social development and establish a more just, peaceful and prosperous social order in the new millennium.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Mr. Jaime Ruiz, Special Adviser to the President of Colombia for Political Affairs.

Mr. Ruiz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of Colombia, I would like to express special thanks for the work that has been done by the working groups and by the Preparatory Committee in order to lay the foundations for this magnificent session.

Any analysis of the efforts Colombia has been making in order to create better living standards for its citizens must first consider the situation of violence stemming from a long internal conflict and, in addition, the explosion of drug-trafficking, which has seriously impaired the country's development.

This reality has led to a vicious circle in which violence has been a constant obstacle to society's finding a sustainable path to development. Probably a new conceptual framework is needed to define, or redefine and evaluate, social development in such circumstances. Of course Colombia is not the only country that has been seriously affected by the worldwide problem of drugs, which has become an illegal business involving billions of dollars that has very serious destabilizing effects on the democracies of countries with smaller economies.

Despite having been forced to face the complex situation that has arisen as a result of this violence, the State of Colombia has over the last few decades been making important efforts to boost its investment in social issues. For example, social expenditure increased from less than 5 per cent of gross domestic product in the 1960s, to 9 per cent in 1990, and to 15.6 per cent in 1996. In other words, social expenditure in Colombia increased fivefold in real terms during the last three decades. We have promoted, in order of priority, education, health, clean drinking water, basic sanitation and housing.

This effort has been reflected in the continuous improvement shown by the traditional indicators of economic and social development: infant mortality dropped from 90 to less than 30 per thousand births for infants under the age of one, while in education, the illiteracy rate decreased from 19 per cent to 10 per cent.

Poverty indicators also showed positive results: between 1985 and 1997, the index of unmet basic needs decreased from 45 per cent to 26 per cent, and that of people living in extreme poverty fell from 22 per cent to 8.6 per cent. However, the progress that is being made on social issues has been stagnant since 1996, inter alia, because of the increasingly serious armed conflict involving drug-trafficking. Uncertainty has meant that investment has dropped to historically low levels, and, consequently, in 1999, for the first time in 60 years, our country had a negative growth rate, and the unemployment rate reached 20 per cent.

Violence and drug-trafficking have become the main obstacles to making further headway on social development. Drug-trafficking has inflicted severe economic and social costs on Colombia. Our country has been forced to spend about $1 billion per year on activities linked to fighting drug-trafficking. There is no doubt that these resources should be used to increase social expenditure.

Illicit crops have had a negative impact on people living in rural areas and on the ecosystems in the environmentally fragile areas such as the Amazon forests. According to estimates, for each hectare sown with an illicit crop such as coca, four hectares of rainforest are destroyed in the Amazon region. This means that in the last 15 years in Colombia, approximately 1 million hectares of forest have been destroyed. At the same time, people living in rural areas involved in such illegal activities have not experienced an improvement of their living standards. Their situation contrasts sharply with the enrichment of the intermediaries and drug-traffickers on the world drug scene.

The conflict in Colombia is therefore a unique conflict requiring unique solutions. The Colombian Government is currently trying to find solutions on three fronts simultaneously. First, it is working to reach a negotiated political solution to its internal conflict, accompanied by a commitment to defend and promote human rights.

Secondly, it is fighting drug-trafficking and its effects, since that phenomenon is for us today public enemy number one and poses a very serious threat to peace-building in Colombia.

Thirdly, we are investing in social issues and in humanitarian assistance, particularly in those rural areas most seriously affected by violence. We hope that this will promote development and help those areas' inhabitants break the cycle of economic dependence on illegal crops. These are major investments which are essential for rebuilding the human, physical, natural and social capital of the country.

All of this action is part of an ambitious plan called "Plan Colombia", which we have already presented to the international community. It is primarily a social plan, as 75 per cent of its resources will be spent on social issues. The goal is to create conditions conducive to advancing the peace process and making it sustainable over the long term.

Colombia, along with only a few other countries, has shouldered almost the entire considerable weight of fighting drug-trafficking, although it is an international problem that is fuelled by the demand for illegal drugs in developed nations. We trust that in future we will see a greater observance of the principle of shared responsibility, and that with the support of the international community, Colombia will be able to overcome the main obstacles that are limiting our development and preventing us from improving social conditions for our people.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Martine Aubry, Minister of Employment and Solidarity of France.

Mrs. Aubry (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, let me say how happy I am to welcome all present.

Our efforts here — five years after the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen — must measure up to the actions taken in that forum. I wish to express here France's hope and conviction that this will be the case.

The Copenhagen Summit was indeed a milestone. If we recall the thinking that prevailed at that time about globalization, we can see that the 1995 Summit prompted a clear shift, resulting in a broad and unprecedented commitment on the part of States and international institutions to combat poverty, and, at the highest political level, giving real meaning to the values underlying social development.

Allow me to touch on the objectives in question.

First, respect for human rights and the effective exercise of all rights — political, civil, economic, social and cultural — must be seen not only as an ethical requirement but also as an element of economic and social development.

Secondly, as the Copenhagen Summit reminded us, inequalities between States and within States, as well as the fight against poverty, require that, at the state level, internal regulatory or corrective intervention in market mechanisms be taken. At the international level, there must be increased solidarity among nations, rich and poor.

The implementation of these objectives requires in particular a partnership with civil society as well as social dialogue. In this respect, in France we have set up a national committee to follow up Copenhagen that includes all of the country's active forces — employer organizations, unions and non-governmental organizations — an original initiative that is in keeping with the commitments undertaken at Copenhagen.

Let us be frank: the outcome of Copenhagen has both positive and negative aspects. Alarmingly, inequities have worsened, not only among States but also within them. The value of this special session lies in the fact that it exposes this reality and allows us to draw the necessary lessons for the future.

France is convinced that we must reaffirm our collective political will to implement and deepen our commitment to the values espoused at the Copenhagen Summit. In this respect, I strongly support the statement made by my Portuguese colleague, who spoke on behalf of the European Union. I take this opportunity to emphasize the outstanding work of the Portuguese presidency of the European Union and its concern for building bridges between North and South. The future French presidency of the European Union will follow in its footsteps.

I welcome also the joint political statement of the French-speaking countries, which expresses our shared concern to fight inequalities, particularly among countries of the North and those of the South.

On the occasion of the renewal of the commitments undertaken at Copenhagen, I should like to stress my country's desire to see progress in four areas.

The first area is that of poverty and marginalization. We must devise far-reaching national

strategies and promote them at the European level. We must give priority to development assistance and to the implementation of the social objectives of United Nations conferences. The eradication of poverty and the fight against inequality must be priority items on the agenda of international cooperation for development. The right to development, of which the individual should be the main beneficiary, requires strong support on the part of the international community.

Secondly, progress must be made in the promotion and effective implementation of human rights and of economic, social and cultural rights. For instance, we must make headway in the implementation of the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Coordinated cooperation programmes will be needed, and multilateral institutions must respect the rights of workers. But these actions must not prompt the wealthier countries to impose a kind of protectionism in disguise. This summit will be a test in this respect.

Thirdly, we must implement rapidly and in full the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, which is due in great part to the Copenhagen Summit. Beyond that, we will have to reflect on ways of preventing the accumulation of excessive debt by developing countries. We must take practical measures in order to achieve a more socially aware management of structural adjustment programmes, an area in which we have made insufficient progress.

Finally, there is an urgent need to elaborate a strategy for the least developed countries, particularly in Africa, on the occasion of the upcoming United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. All aspects of development are involved. Priority must be given to basic social services, inter alia, education and health — two major sectors. France will also work with determination to intensify the fight against major pandemics and to give the poorest countries access to drugs. Emphasis must be placed on the prevention and treatment of AIDS in all of its dimensions, and here again we must make progress in respect to access by the poorest countries to appropriate care. This will require, among other things, strengthened and systematized cooperation among the United Nations agencies and the pharmaceutical companies.

Interesting information and bold initiatives on all of these points can be found in the documents that have been submitted to the Assembly. I hope that we will find them also in the conclusions of the summit. We cannot fail, as our credibility and that of the United Nations is at stake.

I remain confident, however, in the knowledge that decisive progress can be made in the home stretch, as was largely the case at Copenhagen.

I should like to conclude by quoting from the statement made before the Assembly by the French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, in September 1999:

> "Faced with globalization, we have a choice to make. We can either go along with the supposedly universal economic laws, and in so doing abdicate our political responsibilities, or we can seek to impose order on globalization and thereby achieve control of our collective future...This world needs rules. It needs the United Nations." (*A/54/PV.4, p.29*)

The Acting President: I give the floor to Mrs. Anne Konaté, Minister of Finance and Economy of Burkina Faso.

Mrs. Konaté (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I am especially pleased, on behalf of the delegation of Burkina Faso, to address to you, Sir, our warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of this special session of the General Assembly.

I also wish to take this opportunity to fulfil the pleasant duty of thanking the Government and people of Switzerland for everything they have done to facilitate our work. I also wish to thank the Secretariat for the high quality of the documents it has provided and for its overall preparatory work.

This special session, entitled "World Summit for Social Development: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world", is being held at a time when the international scene, particularly in Africa, is still prey to multiple scourges. Just as remarkable progress is being made by the international community, particularly in science and technology, almost 1.5 billion people — one person in four — are still living on less than $1 a day.

With this in mind, the World Summit for Social Development, held from 6 to 12 March 1995 in Copenhagen, considered the fraught issues of poverty,

unemployment and social disintegration. It resulted in the adoption of a Declaration and Programme of Action urging Governments to focus development on the individual and to develop a spirit of cooperation and partnership in response to the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged sectors of society.

Five years after the Summit, we are compelled to recognize that some progress has certainly been made, but that much remains to be done. It is clear that poverty has not been reduced and that it has even increased in some places. Thus, additional action needs to be taken if we are to attain the objectives set in Copenhagen.

Africa has reviewed its progress towards social development. Under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, three subregional conferences have been held, respectively, in Nairobi for East and southern Africa; in Marrakesh for North Africa; and in Ouagadougou for West and Central Africa.

Generally speaking, macroeconomic indicators are positive. Indeed, gross domestic product has increased steadily, from 2.9 per cent growth in 1997 to 3.3 per cent in 1999. The figures for the latter two subregions I mentioned are 3.6 per cent and 4.9 per cent, respectively. Individually, 31 countries out of 53 achieved growth rates higher than their rates of population growth, which has enabled them to increase their per capita income. Of those 31 countries, 13 have seen their gross domestic product increase by at least 5 per cent, the threshold required for sustainable poverty reduction.

Burkina Faso is part of that optimistic picture. In the social sector, we have made considerable progress. In basic education, a priority for my country, the rate of enrolment rose from 35.7 per cent in 1995 to 41 per cent in 1999, and new approaches are being tested. Literacy has increased modestly from 22.2 per cent in 1994 to 24 per cent in 1998. With respect to health, the rate of infant and child mortality fell from 164 per thousand in 1995 to 158 per thousand in 1996. The infant mortality rate dropped from 86 to 82 per thousand in the same period.

While these few statistics are cause for cautious optimism, we remain convinced that the task ahead is enormous. Burkina Faso reiterates its will and commitment to implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and, to that end, urges all its development partners to release additional resources for sustainable development.

These days, three additional phenomena — conflicts, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and environmental degradation — are exacerbating and spreading poverty throughout the world. These three phenomena, individually and in conjunction, have pushed millions of people back below the poverty line in the past 15 years by eroding their resources and destroying their environment.

In this context, poverty eradication will be an increasingly important challenge in the years to come, especially in the regions worst affected, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty is one of the major scourges of that region, both because of its scope and growth and because of its serious threat to social, political and economic stability, as recently stressed by the former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Mr. Michel Camdessus, when he said: "Peace and development are based on rapid and convincing progress in poverty reduction".

The principal features of poverty in Africa are meagre levels of economic growth, significant imbalance in income and ownership of the methods of production, and lack of access to basic services, which lead in turn to a low rate of human resource development and inadequate agricultural production.

In many African countries, economic performance has considerably improved since the mid-1990s and the increase in average per capita gross domestic product has accelerated throughout the continent. Our growth remains fragile, however, and insufficient to stem the spread of poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa, where 50 per cent of the population lives in absolute poverty — as opposed to 20 per cent in North Africa — the problem is critical.

Moreover, while the situation of women has considerably improved over the past 40 years, thanks in particular to such international instruments as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, a wide gap remains between promises and action when it comes to pursuing this progress in Africa.

Economic and legal obstacles to African women and the discrimination to which they are subject in society limit the impact of policies drafted and actions

taken to improve their situation, increase their productivity and allow them to develop to the full. In this respect, I would cite the paucity of investment in education and health care for women; their lack of access to services and consumer goods; and the legal and regulatory obstacles limiting their opportunities and preventing them from contributing fully to the continent's development.

In the new context of globalization and liberalization, Africa is the most subdivided of all the continents, with 165 borders dividing the region into 51 countries, 22 of which have fewer than 5 million inhabitants and 11 of which have less than 1 million. Thus, the continent faces very substantial problems of supply and demand. That is why, without regional cooperation, no African country can compete in the world's markets.

It was with this in mind that the three subregional conferences were held to help Governments adjust their policies so as to improve and consolidate the results they have already achieved and to draw up a common vision for Africa. As I mentioned earlier, Burkina Faso hosted one of these conferences last September to demonstrate its commitment to the development of the continent and to the solidarity of its peoples. The outcome of its work was the adoption of the Ouagadougou Declaration, which recommended, inter alia, the undertaking of structural economic reforms to support growth, encourage local savings and boost investment in the private sector; the promotion of dialogue and cooperation between all parties working for poverty reduction; the implementation of the 20/20 initiative and the establishment of a system to monitor the completeness rates of allocated credit and to create follow-up committees in those countries that do not yet have them; and the strengthening of capacity to absorb the principles and practices of democracy and good governance.

One of the major constraints Africa faces — and this cannot be repeated often enough — is the lack of financial resources. Many developing countries have not yet reached the target of 20 per cent set as part of the 20/20 initiative, because they are still spending most of their available resources to service their external debt. In this regard, debt relief would release resources to be spent on the social sector. As far as official development assistance is concerned, the situation remains worrisome, and each year the assistance totals decline yet more steadily.

The total amount of official development assistance provided by the countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 1997 was approximately 0.22 per cent of these countries' gross national product. Only four countries have kept their promises to increase their level of aid above the 0.7 per cent of gross national product proposed by international consensus. If every country had kept its promise, the resources thus mobilized would have been sufficient to eradicate extreme poverty.

Faced with resource problems, several countries have tried to deal with the problem of creating health and education systems by asking the users to make a financial contribution or by introducing some kind of cost-sharing programme. However, fairness suffers as a result of this, because the poor do not have access to these services, as they cannot even pay for the essential minimum of services, even at reduced cost.

At the dawn of the new millennium, we hope that Africa will be able to pull itself out of the crisis conditions that since independence have often been its daily lot. The Africa of tomorrow is beginning to show itself as a continent that can stand proudly alongside its trade partners from the rest of the world and that will enjoy sustainable development, a continent where within 30 years all will have access to health care, there will be universal education, stability will be a human right and all types of poverty will have been swept aside.

This vision of an African renaissance is not a mirage. Many countries have made encouraging and visible progress in reforming their economies and in establishing structures and development policies that will allow them to increase equity and roll back poverty.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Maj-Inger Klingvall, Minister for Development Cooperation, Migration and Asylum Policy of Sweden.

Ms. Klingvall (Sweden):

> "Poverty is pain; it feels like a disease. It attacks a person not only materially but also morally. It eats away one's dignity and drives one into total despair."

This is how poverty is described by one of the voices cited in *Voices of the Poor*, a recent World Bank study. These words highlight the fact that poverty and

exclusion mean not just a lack of material resources. They also mean a lack of rights, knowledge, influence and health, which may differently affect various groups in society. Poverty is a lack of power, which, in turn, is a matter of democracy.

Poverty reduction requires investments that can empower people to work for a better life for themselves, their families and their societies. It requires integration between economic and social policy, based on an inclusive strategy, that encompasses each and everyone.

Human rights are universal. This requires that rights-based policies should be applicable to all individuals. The conventions on human rights clearly establish that Governments have a responsibility to guarantee civil and political rights, as well as social, economic and cultural rights, to every member of their societies. In this context, I would like to underline the importance of recognizing the rights of the child and of fulfilling the provisions set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. National policies and strategies must target the whole population.

If poverty and social exclusion are to be tackled, we must see the linkage between political, economic, environmental and social development. This requires a strong partnership between Governments, non-governmental organizations and other actors in the international community. The United Nations plays a key role in this context. This is clearly expressed in the Secretary-General's report to the Millennium Summit. Individuals, as well as Governments, expect the United Nations to take a more active lead in the fight against poverty.

The World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995, was a ground-breaking event. For the first time in history, world leaders explored the interlinkage between social development and economic growth. We know that progress has been made since Copenhagen. The Summit has inspired the world community to place poverty reduction at the top of its agenda. We must confirm at this session that our joint target should be to reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half by the year 2015. We should also agree on how to reach the other global development targets.

This requires renewed efforts. Since Copenhagen we have also seen back-lashes, in particular in areas where armed conflicts and HIV/AIDS have had devastating effects. Further action must be taken. International cooperation must be strengthened. I will here highlight some important areas.

First, countries with more advanced economies must take the target 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance seriously. Progress must be made towards reaching this goal. I am glad to say that for the coming years Sweden will be able to further increase its allocations to 0.8 per cent, with the aim of again reaching 1 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance. In addition to increasing the volume of aid, Sweden has launched a major review and evaluation of our development cooperation policy.

Secondly, we must alleviate the heavy burden of debts facing developing countries. An important instrument to this end is the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. Sweden has been a strong supporter of the HIPC Initiative since it was launched in 1996. Together with our Nordic friends and the Netherlands and Switzerland we have delivered substantially more than half of the paid-in contributions to the fund. HIPC requires sustained efforts over several years. Broad participation and fair burden-sharing are essential.

Furthermore, we must improve the working conditions for workers all over the world. With regard to employment and labour, the Social Summit identified certain core labour standards to be applied all over the world, regardless of level of development. This paved the way for the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which will become a milestone for human rights at work, for development and for social justice. I hope that during this session we will be able to reconfirm our unreserved support for the Declaration and send a message to all international organizations to be active in the protection of human rights of workers all over the world.

Finally, there is the issue of equality between women and men. The General Assembly special session on women, held in early June, at which I myself participated, noted both achievements and obstacles in its review. That session, Beijing+5, adopted action-oriented documents with a clear gender perspective and a strong recognition of the mutually reinforcing links between gender equality and poverty

eradication. These must be crucial elements for us here in setting a framework for social development.

In concluding, poverty eradication requires political will and commitment. An even distribution of growing wealth is a fundamental tool to establish a more fair and equal society. We should commit ourselves to a comprehensive strategy which includes full employment, a fair distribution of resources and a social policy where services and programmes reach the whole population. These are key elements in a national, as well as an international, policy for sustainable development.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Krishna Chandra Pant, Minister and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of India.

Mr. Pant (India): The Social Summit held in Copenhagen in 1995 made a commitment to improve the quality of life of people in all regions of the world. For developing countries, which accepted the goals of the Summit by consensus, international support was considered crucial. A review of the progress in the last five years indicates that the goals set out in the Copenhagen Programme of Action have been only partially achieved. We are now considering new initiatives to ensure attainment of these objectives. In his report to the Millennium Summit, the Secretary-General has also challenged our leaders to agree to a set of tasks and objectives which draw on the commitments of the Copenhagen Programme of Action.

We also have to achieve our goals in the specific context of globalization. The challenge is how to secure the benefits of globalization, particularly for vulnerable societies, and safeguard social systems.

We agree with Professor Amartya Sen, as all democratic Governments will, that development is the process of expanding human freedoms, and the assessment of development has to be informed by this consideration. At this special session, in this international setting, we should focus on areas where progress will be impossible without international support and action.

I will refer briefly to some areas where international cooperation will be critical to our success. The first is the eradication of poverty, Commitment 2 in the Programme of Action, which is crucial to social development. The World Health Organization (WHO) has listed extreme poverty in its International Classification of Diseases, reminding us that over 1 billion people have entered the twenty-first century "with their lives cut short or scarred by this ruthless disease". Without sustained growth, poverty will not be reduced, let alone eradicated. Nationally, several countries have formulated their own strategies for poverty eradication. Broadly, the strategy is a three-pronged one: one, economic growth; two, direct State intervention through programmes of poverty alleviation; and three, investment in human capital. In most developing countries, including India, agriculture and allied activities are the primary source of livelihood for the majority of their population. Therefore, investment in these sectors through development of appropriate technologies will generate both higher levels of output and greater employment. Support also needs to be extended to microenterprises and village and small industries, as the scope for stepping up organized sector employment in the short run is limited.

Let me add that in all efforts at poverty eradication, special care has to be taken to meet the needs of women and other marginalized and vulnerable groups. In India, the empowerment of women and socially disadvantaged groups has been woven into our development effort.

Crucial to the global effort are the problems of the youth of the world, which have rarely been addressed. We believe that youth employment must be a priority for all of us. As for today's children, it is necessary to build their capabilities and to make them more employable as tomorrow's workforce. This calls for greater investment in education and health and qualitative improvements to make the delivery system more efficient and cost-effective.

I would also like to stress the effectiveness of participatory approaches to development. Central to our success is the perennial problem of resources. The World Education Forum, held in Dakar in April, estimated that an additional $8 billion would be needed per year only to meet the target of universal primary education, one of the agreed objectives of Commitment 6. On health, the figures put out by the World Health Organization are truly revealing. Of the $60 billion spent each year on health research, only 10 per cent is devoted to the health problems endemic in the developing countries. WHO estimated last year that

malaria alone had an economic cost to Africa equivalent to 1 per cent of the continent's gross domestic product. Tuberculosis is making a comeback. The economic and social costs of HIV/AIDS, 95 per cent of whose victims are in the developing world, have not yet been accurately assessed, but will be even steeper.

The shortfall in resources simply to meet these two basic, essential social goals — universal primary education and basic health care — is huge and clearly beyond the capacity of the developing countries to meet. It shows why official development assistance has a critical role to play in social development, in which the private sector rarely invests. This is why it is disturbing that the levels of official development assistance continue to fall. As the World Bank has noted, though the fiscal problems given as the reason for the drop in official development assistance have eased, with fiscal deficits in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries declining from 4.3 per cent of gross domestic product in 1993 to 1.3 per cent in 1997, official development assistance also fell by 14 per cent in this period. The developed world has to recognize that a reversal of this trend is essential to meet the ambitious goals set out at the Copenhagen Summit.

It bears underlining that the progress of Africa will be the key to the success of the developing world.

International cooperation is also essential to defeat the forces of the global "uncivil society". Terrorism, transnational crime, drug-trafficking and xenophobia undermine social development and social values; drawing up international strategies to defeat them must be a priority for all of us.

As the World Bank has also pointed out, the well-being of the poor depends increasingly on forces originating outside country borders. The impact of globalization is, of course, so well documented that it needs no further illustration. What is of central concern to the poor of the world is that the spin-offs from globalization must translate into social benefits for the 1.2 billion marginalized people. India would favour any move to channel as much as possible of the gains of globalization into time-bound poverty eradication initiatives.

In 1992, the *Human Development Report* estimated that if the industrialized countries followed less restrictive trade policies, the developing world would earn in trade 10 times what it receives as official development assistance. Resources mean a greater flow not only of funds in the form of aid, external assistance and foreign direct investment, but also of knowledge and technology. These various forms of support have to be organized on an international scale and in a manner which makes them accessible to the poor. In today's global village, peace and sustainable development will ultimately rest on our sensitivity to each other's concerns.

Let this session be remembered for making a firm commitment to pool all global resources to eradicate poverty, which, despite all our efforts, continues to afflict a large number of people across the globe.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services of the United States of America.

Ms. Shalala (United States of America): If Shakespeare had joined us five years ago in Copenhagen, he might have said this about Hamlet's homeland: "Something is extraordinary in the State of Denmark".

What was extraordinary? The World Summit for Social Development and the Declaration and Programme of Action that were adopted at the Summit's conclusion.

At Copenhagen, we opened our eyes to a world struggling and poor. Both the developed and developing world saw poverty in the midst of plenty, joblessness in the midst of an economic boom and discrimination and gender inequality in the midst of new-found freedom.

Vice-President Gore summed up this challenge when he noted, five years ago in Copenhagen, "Economic growth cannot be sustained unless its fruits are continually invested in nourishing human potential". That is exactly why we are here: to see how far we have come in nourishing human potential around the world, and how far we still must go.

Five years after Copenhagen, poverty, lack of education, infectious diseases, violence against women, unemployment and debt still grip much of the world. But in the United States, as in other countries represented here, we are committed to eradicating poverty, promoting full employment and building a society where every voice is welcome and every opportunity is shared.

We are committed to working with all our international partners to foster international economic growth, social integration and public health around the globe. We are committed to a philosophy of social and economic development that views the poor not as passive recipients of aid but as decision-makers in control of their own future.

Earlier this month at the Beijing+5 conference in New York, we said that, in the face of the very real challenges and opportunities of globalization, we are committed to helping women live lives of equality, dignity and prosperity. Women are half of humanity, but we will not settle for half of our rights.

In the United States we are working hard to put our own house in order. For the first time in over two decades our budget is balanced. We are in the midst of the longest economic expansion in our nation's history, which has helped reduce unemployment to a level not seen in 30 years. At the same time, our poverty rates are the lowest they have been in two decades. Still, we have much work to do. The United States must enforce laws against racial and sexual discrimination, expand our own health-care system, support worker training, invest in our own most impoverished regions and improve education.

As for social integration, our Declaration of Independence espouses one simple belief: that all men and women are created equal. Yet for years my country denied fundamental rights to women and passed laws discriminating against African Americans. We no longer live with these terrible laws. But we do live with their consequences. I am talking about poverty, unequal education, employment discrimination and gaps in health outcomes. African Americans, Hispanics and American Indians generally suffer disproportionately high rates of cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and other diseases. That is why in 1998 our President set a goal of eliminating major racial and ethnic health disparities.

From micro-loans in Bangladesh and AIDS prevention in Uganda, to emerging democracy and economic stability in Eastern Europe, together we have made great progress towards human rights and social development. Nevertheless, we believe that we have five challenges to meet in order to reach the goals that we set five years ago in Copenhagen. These challenges are critical steps that will help to end poverty and promote full employment and social integration.

First, liberty is the soil of sustainable development. There can be no end to poverty without political rights, free expression and a civil society. Secondly, women must be given full equality, at home, in education and in the workplace so that their talents, energy and passion can be an engine for social development. As President Clinton said recently in India, "When women have access to knowledge, health, economic opportunity and civil rights, children thrive, families succeed and countries prosper".

Thirdly, we must expand access to health care for everyone, teach prevention and stop the worldwide pandemic of infectious diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. We must finish our worldwide effort to eliminate polio, and we must stop the marketing of tobacco to children.

Fourthly, the time has come to ensure that the benefits of development and globalization are broadly shared around the globe. That means advocating for full employment, higher living standards, equal treatment of women in the workplace and the end of abusive child labour. This requires that we do all we can to respect, promote and realize fundamental workers' rights, protect the environment and build a social safety net that protects our most vulnerable citizens — the young, the old and the disabled — as well as workers who have lost their jobs.

Fifth, in order to achieve positive change, we must continue to work together. The days of government dictating solutions are over. Today, we know that some of the best answers come through partnerships among non-governmental organizations, the private sector, government and local communities. We must also listen directly to our people, particularly the poorest among us, for their ideas and solutions.

Hamlet said, "the readiness is all". We, too, must be ready to roll up our sleeves, link arms and finish the great task we began five short years ago in Copenhagen.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mario Palma-Rojo, Vice-Minister for Regional Development of Mexico.

Mr. Palma-Rojo (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Copenhagen 1995 was a historic forum where, by consensus, we established the first goals and policies that would become points of reference for social issues at the global level. It was at Copenhagen where social

development was first included as a priority on the international agenda.

The political will and conviction expressed five years ago to focus the world's efforts on the fight against poverty and social exclusion are still present and continue to be a priority and a source of legitimate expectations for the inhabitants of our countries.

Thus, today Mexico reaffirms the commitments undertaken at the Summit, which are consistent with the historical and legitimate struggle of Mexicans for freedom, sovereignty, social justice and democracy, reports on the progress made and joins in the invitation to increase the scope of social policy in an effort to face with greater chances of success the complex problems of poverty, marginalization and social inequality.

In the social and political arena, Mexico is experiencing unprecedented democratic progress today. We have electoral bodies headed by citizens, and we have undertaken the most profound and transcendental democratic reform of our entire history.

Over these five years, President Zedillo's Administration has authorized priority action in the social domain, as it recognizes that only through the eradication of poverty will the demands of Mexican social justice will be met. Thus, it has allocated increasing amounts of the budget to meet the outstanding needs of the poorest members of the population.

In this regard, in the past five years the federal budget allocated to social development has shown an annual average growth of 7 per cent in real terms, and this year the figure is $50 billion; that is 61 per cent of the amount budgeted, an amount never before reached in Mexico.

All this has been attained in a context of stability, sound public finances, low inflation and an average annual eco .omic growth of 5 per cent in the last four years. N.vertheless, we are aware that although budgetary allocations are vital, other factors are required in order for social policy to be effectively translated into concrete actions, into tangible, everyday well-being for the people.

These factors include the comprehensiveness and relevance of actions, the convergence of the various levels of Government, the decentralization of actions, the assessment of policies, transparency in the use of resources and, particularly, the participation of civil society.

Comprehensive programmes are required, through which social rights are guaranteed to all individuals. However, we must also have programmes focused on the neediest groups in an effort to break the vicious cycle of poverty.

In Mexico we have managed to take health-care services to 98 per cent of the population, and educational services have increased significantly at all levels, particularly primary education, which includes 98 per cent of children.

Regarding specific actions to reduce poverty, in Mexico we are carrying out many programmes that reach the most underprivileged, directly or indirectly, including more than 40 million people. In less than three years, we have developed a programme for health, education and nutrition, called Progresa, targeting families in extreme poverty. This programme provides assistance to 2.6 million families, that is 14 million persons. Its scope of action is broad. It includes monetary assistance in the form of scholarships for boys and girls to attend school, giving priority to girls; and providing food to the youngest children and to pregnant and lactating women. Additionally, it provides health-care services to families as a whole and monetary assistance for purchasing food products.

This programme, in the brief period it has been in existence, is already having a significant impact on the improvement of the nutrition and school attendance rates of beneficiaries. In secondary education, for example, there has been an increase in school enrolment of 26 per cent for boys and 38 per cent for girls in only two years.

Furthermore, resources are delivered directly to the mothers. Progresa provides significant support to the female gender as part of the comprehensive actions of the Government to give priority to women in all programmes.

We have learned that, although actions that provide social services are indispensable, they are insufficient. We know that social programmes will not resolve the poverty problem unless they are accompanied by actions that strengthen productive capacity and generate paid and permanent jobs.

Thus, we are promoting productive programmes of all sorts, providing small loans to encourage self-

employment or to establish social enterprises or small businesses, as well as to generate jobs, through small, medium-sized and large enterprises, that offer the possibility of living with dignity, opening new horizons to individuals and their families.

In regard to the commitments made by the Government of Mexico five years ago, it is important to note that the average life expectancy of Mexicans is currently 75 years, which is 15 years longer than the agreed target. In 1998, Mexico recorded a mortality rate of 28 per thousand for children under 5 years of age, which is 17 points below the goal of 45 per thousand established at the Summit. In regard to children under one year of age, by 1998 the mortality rate had dropped to 24 per thousand which is 11 points below the goal of 35 per thousand established at the Summit.

There is total vaccination coverage, and in relation to education, practically all Mexican boys and girls now have free access to basic education. In terms of employment, from 1995 to 1999, the urban open unemployment rate dropped significantly from 6.2 per cent to 2.5 per cent of the economically active population. In five years we increased the number of employed in the formal sector of the economy by 6 million.

The main goals established at the World Summit five years ago have been met through the joint actions of Government and society. Nevertheless, our concerns and commitment remain with those who are not included in the statistics for each goal, which ultimately express only averages. We are aware of the need for sustained efforts in order to resolve the multiple facets of poverty and marginalization still pending. Accomplishing this aim is the main challenge we face as a nation at the beginning of this century.

Once again, it is the historical responsibility of this forum not only to establish the common goals of humanity in terms of social development, but also to lead the efforts on which we agree here.

The Government of Mexico reiterates its commitment to the noble purposes that guided the World Summit for Social Development, in the conviction that it is a historic landmark in peoples' efforts to bring closer the day when we fulfil our shared desire to see poverty disappear from our countries and from the face of the Earth.

The Acting President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Hans Heinemann, Chairman of the delegation of the Netherlands.

Mr. Heinemann (Netherlands): The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen was more than a meeting of hope. It was also an expression of our will to act; a decisive step to tackle the chronic worldwide problems of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. The special sessions of the General Assembly are meetings of accountability and an important opportunity for taking new initiatives. We succeeded in taking a step forward for the women of the world during the Beijing process. We now have to do the same for social development. We ask ourselves, "What did we achieve, and what are the tasks for the near future?"

First, what did we achieve? For the Netherlands, the Social Summit was an acknowledgement of the fact that prosperity and poverty also exist side by side even in a wealthy country like ours. It was the end of the complacency and the start of a comprehensive programme for work and income.

The report of the Secretary-General clearly shows that progress has been made since Copenhagen. Worldwide there is more attention paid to fighting poverty. Worldwide there is more attention paid to developing social policy. There is a growing consciousness that economic progress should not be made at the expense of people. Social development and economic performance are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. There is a growing awareness that decent work is an essential link to a decent existence. Our insights have deepened. Our way of thinking has changed. Measures have been taken. But we are only at the beginning.

Five years is a short span of time for Governments and organizations to fully implement Copenhagen. But five years is a long span of time — too long a span — for the people we have to reach. We will have to boost our performance in order to ameliorate the daily lives of people; and time is not on our side, because since Copenhagen there are more poor people. There is an increasing number of the so-called working poor. Poverty in urban areas is an increasing problem. The ageing of societies has continued at a rapid pace. The disparities between and within countries are growing. Employment opportunities in developing countries have grown, but

opportunities have grown most of all in the informal, low-paid and unprotected sectors.

This special session can make a difference. So what are the tasks for the future? I shall point out four areas that require better performance. The first area is work, health and education. What we urgently need are strategies geared towards full employment. We need more and better jobs to enable the millions of unemployed people to work to escape poverty. We have to work on strategies that allow economic and social policy to be mutually reinforcing. We have to start developing policies to achieve economic growth in favour of the poor. The awareness that social policy can be a productive factor makes a world of difference.

Expenditures for social policy are not just costs that have to be minimized. Social policy is of vital importance for economic performance, the sustainability of social safety nets and the participation of people. The Netherlands is now restructuring its social security system to make sure that it is a springboard, not a trap.

For a sustainable future we must ensure decent work for all. Together with its European Union partners, the Netherlands stresses the importance of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on fundamental labour standards. We call for the universal ratification and full implementation of the ILO core conventions, including, and in particular, the Convention on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. In a world economy in which globalization and liberalization are leading principles, fundamental labour standards form a necessary counter-balance. In this conference we must ensure that the international rules of the game are fair and just.

Health, education, work and a better life are inextricably connected to one another. Therefore, we have to realize access for all to basic social services such as health services and education. Knowledge is a key to economic and social progress. Our goal must be that we do not rest until all children are given a chance to go to school so that we do not have to worry about child labour.

The second point is about the social responsibility of the private sector. In order to make our commitments operational, we need the help of the private sector. This is an appeal to the private sector to join in and to consider the well-being of people as part of their core business, as do the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the ILO. Act globally and work locally, with dignity and care. That, too, is a benchmark for success. In a world in which mutual economic dependency is growing, it is both a moral and a rational choice.

Thirdly, good governance is a prerequisite for social development. The rule of law, effective State institutions, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, respect for human rights and the participation of all citizens in the decisions that affect their lives are essential elements. The report of the Secretary-General for the Millennium Summit is very clear on this issue. We should follow his example and clearly state our commitment to good governance. Good governance is the only way to win and preserve the trust of citizens. It is not an easy way to go, but it is the only way. This applies both to relations within a country and to relations between countries. Good governance concerns all levels of public administration, but it also includes good corporate governance.

The Netherlands deeply regrets that official development assistance is still far below the internationally agreed targets. This is incompatible with the comprehensive and complex international development agenda. We call upon all Governments to stand by the agreement for official development assistance.

My fourth and last point is the necessity for cooperation and the preparedness to listen. Five years after the Copenhagen Summit, we are more convinced than ever that cooperation is absolutely necessary nationally and internationally, not only because two know more than one, but because two can also do more than one. The Netherlands strongly believes in donor coordination and ownership. Debt alleviation is a key in the development agenda of highly indebted poor countries. This should be based on a poverty reduction strategy developed by the countries themselves. It is striking proof of the need for cooperation between all relevant factors, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations. We strongly support the work of the World Bank and the IMF in promoting the poverty reduction strategy papers. We now have to act in order to turn this acknowledgement and willingness into practical results that improve the lives of hundreds of millions of poor people. The fight against poverty, decent work for all and social integration is a common aim of all actors gathered here at Geneva.

Governments, parliaments, social organizations, churches, the private sector, municipalities and, last but not least, the people themselves have to work together to achieve this goal. Only open communication and cooperation can ensure that all people reap the benefits of economic growth and globalization.

As a final remark, let me quote the representative of our youth delegation, who said,

> "The decisions you are taking are about our futures. We want to join in and contribute our share."

She is right. We have a major responsibility towards future generations.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.